

### REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed on September 26, 2005 ("Office Action"). Claims 1-46 are pending in the application. Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 10, 16-18, 20-23, 26, 27, 33, 36, 40-43, 45 and 46 were rejected and Claims 6, 9, 11-15, 19, 24, 25, 28-32, 34, 35, 37-39 and 44 were objected to in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

#### Amendment to the Specification

The Specification is amended to correct the reference number for expansion joints from 76 to 74 in the indicated paragraph. Applicants submit no new matter is added.

#### Allowable Claims

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that Claims 6, 9, 11-15, 19, 24, 25, 28-32, 34, 35, 37-39 and 44 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Objected to Claims 13 and 25 are rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicant submits Claims 13 and 25 are now allowable.

#### Section 102 Rejections

The Office action rejected Claims 1-5, 8, 10, 17, 18, 20-23, 26, 27, 33, 36, 40, 42, 43, 45 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,710,739 to Jourdain ("*Jourdain*"). While Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and the assertions and holdings therein, Claim 1 is amended to add the elements of objected to Claim 19. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 1 and its dependent claims are now in condition for allowance. Claim 20 is amended to add the elements of objected to Claim 32. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 20 and its dependent claims are now in condition for allowance. Claims 19 and 32 are canceled.

Claim 45 is amended to add an element analogous to objected to Claim 19. Accordingly, Applicant submits Claim 45 is now in condition for allowance.

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### Section 103 Rejections

The Office action rejected Claims 7 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Jourdain*, and also rejected Claims 16 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Jourdain* in view of U.S. Patent No. 202,570 to Wray ("*Wray*"). While Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection and all the assertions and holdings therein, Applicant requests that the rejection be withdrawn in view of the foregoing amendments to independent Claims 1 and 20.

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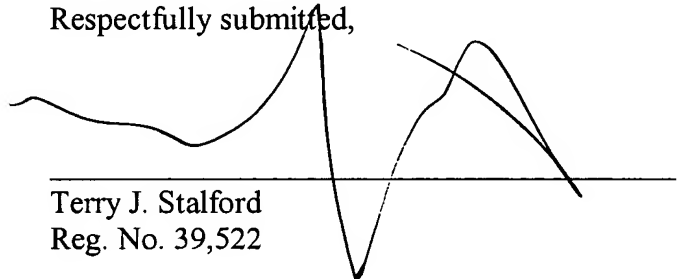
### CONCLUSION

Applicants have now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all Claims.

If the present application is not allowed and/or if one or more of the rejections is maintained, Applicants hereby request a telephone conference with the Examiner and further requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney to schedule the telephone conference.

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$320 for excess claim fees and a one-month extension of time. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry J. Stalford', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T' and 'S'.

Terry J. Stalford  
Reg. No. 39,522

Date: January 18, 2006

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